REMARKS

The Examiner is thanked for the courtesies extended to Applicant's undersigned Attorney during the January 19, 2005 telephone interview. During the interview, the above-identified claim amendments were discussed in view of the following remarks.

Reconsideration of this application and the rejection of claims 1-5 are respectfully requested. Applicant has attempted to address every ground for rejection in the Office Action dated October 27, 2004 and believes the application is now in condition for allowance. The claims have been amended to more clearly describe the present invention. Applicant has also amended the specification to correct for typographical errors and to more clearly describe the present invention. No new matter has been entered.

Claims 1, 2 and 5 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Sollenberger et al (U.S. Pat. No. 2,132,053). Sollenberger disclose a self-training idler including a conveyor belt 7, belt-supporting rolls 8, 9 and 11 and a pair of guide rolls 37, which are disposed in proximity to the edge of the belt. The belt-supporting rolls are independently movable, and are trained to center the belt 7 to a centered position. The guide roll 37 is mounted on either side of the belt and is attached to a torque arm 36. The torque arm 36 is pivotally connected at one end to a control bar 44 and at the other end to a pivotable member 15 by means of a lever arm 33. (FIGs. 1-4).

In contrast, amended claim 1 recites, among other things, an alignment system for a conveyor including "a guide control bar having two ends and being pivotally connected at each said end to a corresponding torque arm that is fixedly connected to a corresponding pivoting member, said bar including guide rollers adaptedly positioned at both edges of the conveyor belt for lateral control of said belt." Support for the amendment to claim 1 is seen in FIG. 3 of the above-identified application.

Applicant submits that as amended, claim 1 is patentably distinct from the conveyor system in Sollenberger, because in Sollenberger, the torque arm 36 is pivotally connected to the guide control bar 44 and also to the pivoting member 15 by a lever arm 33 (FIGs. 1 and 4). In other words, the torque arm 36 is connected to pivot points (34 and 38) at both ends. Therefore, Applicant submits that amended claim 1 is patentably distinct from Sollenberger, and respectfully traverses the rejection of claim 1 under Section 102(b).

Claim 4 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sollenberger et al (U.S. Pat. No. 2,132,053). Applicant submits that due to the amendments made to claim 1, from which claim 4 depends, claim 4 is allowable for the same reason as claim 1 and for the additional structure it provides. Therefore, Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection of claim 4 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

Claim 3 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sollenberger et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 2,132,053) in view of Hovsto et al (U.S. Pat. No. 6,131,726). Because claim 3 depends from claim 1, the arguments asserted above traversing Sollenberger with respect to claim 1 are reasserted here. Hovsto discloses a belt steering assembly having a steering bracket 2 configured for supporting two steering rollers 1. The steering bracket 2 is rotatably attached at a first fulcrum 4, which is located on a beam 11 which extends between side members 10 on the side of the belt steering assembly. The steering bracket 2 is further connected to a lever arm 6 via a first rotating joint 17. The lever arm 6 is connected at its opposite end via a second rotating joint 8 to a guide bracket 7, which supports guide rollers 9. (Col. 3, ll. 10-28; FIG. 1).

In contrast, amended claim 1 now recites, among other things, "pivoting members mounted on a corresponding support bracket, said pivoting members configured for supporting tracking rollers at tracking roller shaft ends; and a guide control bar having two ends and being pivotally connected at each said end to a corresponding torque arm that is fixedly connected to said corresponding pivoting member." Support for this amendment can be found in FIG. 3 of the above-identified application.

Neither Sollenberger nor Hovsto, alone or in combination, suggest or disclose the features recited in amended claim 1. Applicant submits that neither Sollenberger nor Hovsto disclose or suggest a torque arm that is fixedly connected

to a pivoting member. Rather, both Sollenberger and Hovsto teach away from this feature by disclosing a pivoting/rotating relationship between the torque arm and the pivoting member. (See FIG. 4 of Sollenberger; see FIG. 1 of Hovsto). Therefore, based on the above arguments in support of claim 1, from which claim 3 depends, Applicant respectfully traverses the obviousness rejection of claim 3 over Sollenberger in view of Hovsto.

Applicant has added new claim 6 to the application to further distinguish the present belt alignment system from the cited references. Specifically, new claim 6 recites, among other things, an alignment system where "said pivoting member is pivotable about an axis transverse to a longitudinal axis defined by said tracking roller shaft; said guide control bar being connected at each said end to said corresponding tracking roller shaft end at only two pivot points." Unlike new claim 6, both Sollenberger and Hovsto disclose a different pivotable relationship between the pivoting member and tracking roller shaft, and include a more complicated linkage with more pivot points. Therefore, Applicant submits that claim 6 is patentably distinct from both cited references and is in allowable form.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, the application is respectfully submitted to be in allowable form. Allowance of the rejected claims is respectfully requested. Should the Examiner discover there are remaining issues

which may be resolved by a telephone interview, he is invited to contact Applicant's undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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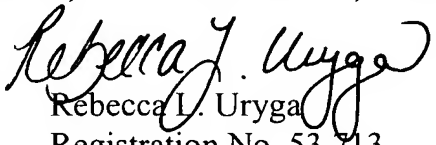
By 
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